

Mobilising Women for Hitler: the female Nazi voter

By Helen Boak, 2021

‘We gained more women than all the other parties together’, boasted Hitler.¹ While this is patently untrue, as the NSDAP rarely, in those areas where men and women voted separately, managed to win over 50% of the female vote, it is clear that in Protestant areas in 1932 the NSDAP was receiving more votes from women than from men.² It is the purpose of this chapter to explore how such a self-confessedly male party as the NSDAP mobilised the female vote, the reasons for its success with female voters and the type of woman who might have voted NSDAP. To what extent did the Nazis’ methods of mobilising women voters differ from those of the other major political parties in the Weimar Republic? Is it possible to discern a distinctive appeal to women in Nazi propaganda? It is now twenty years since Thomas Childers provided a comprehensive analysis of the political parties’ election campaign appeals within a broader study of the formation of the Nazi constituency and two studies in German have since analysed the propaganda appeals of the NSDAP and the SPD.³ None of these studies concentrates on the parties’ attempts to win women’s votes, an omission recently rectified by Julia Sneeringer who has examined the parties’ printed appeals to women in Berlin to investigate how they attempted to win women’s votes and how their propaganda constructed women as political actors.⁴ In exploring the new mobilisation strategies and the new areas of propaganda which the parties of the Weimar Republic believed they had to produce in order to win women’s votes, one can not only provide an insight into the electoral politics of the Weimar Republic but also throw light on the role electoral propaganda played in mobilising women voters, and, thereby, contribute to the debate on the effectiveness of propaganda in winning

votes for specific parties. For many years historians have assumed that the success of the NSDAP's propaganda contributed significantly to its rise to power, though this view was questioned by Richard Bessel who argued that both the function and the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda had not been analysed in any depth. Bessel emphasised the role played by social and political culture and the failure of the Weimar system in the rise of the Nazis.⁵ His view would seem to be supported by the work of Oded Heilbrunner who, in his study of the NSDAP in the Black Forest, has shown that the Nazis' success at the polls cannot be seen as evidence of the effectiveness of the party's propaganda and organisation.⁶ Ian Kershaw has, however, demonstrated the distinctiveness in the components, style and presentation of the Nazis' propaganda and the important role it played in creating an image for the party and in its success.⁷ This chapter will attempt to assess the effectiveness of each party's propaganda aimed at women during the Weimar Republic in creating a distinctive image for the party and the role played by gender-specific propaganda in mobilising the female vote and to explore the methods used by the political parties to mobilise it in an attempt to assess the distinctiveness of Nazi propaganda and its success in mobilising women voters.

German women aged 20 and over were given the vote by the Council of People's Delegates on 12 November 1918, barely ten years after German women had been granted complete freedom of association, that is the right to attend political meetings and join political parties, and it became imperative for women's groups and the political parties to educate and mobilise women voters for the forthcoming elections to the National Assembly.⁸ Throughout the Weimar Republic the main vehicles for the political parties to spread their message to the female electorate, which the parties

perceived from the outset as a discrete constituency, were written propaganda and meetings, and women party members were instrumental in the provision and organisation of both as winning women's votes quickly became the remit of the parties' women's sections or committees although the KPD did try unsuccessfully to convince men that winning women's votes was the work of the whole party.⁹ Radio was in its infancy during the Weimar Republic and was not allowed to be used as a political medium, except on rare occasions. Kate Lacey believes that the principle of keeping politics off the radio had grave consequences for women's political education, as it could reach women within their own homes.¹⁰ The majority of the female electorate were housewives: in 1925 21,025,998 women were aged 20 or over and 12,710,070 were married, though 37,539 of them were under 20.¹¹ Women, whose use of public space outside the home was, as Karen Hagemann has noted, 'extraordinarily circumscribed', could be educated about politics in the home, at work, in church, within the organisations they joined or by attending the segregated meetings, indoor and out, held by the political parties.¹² The parties' general public meetings tended to consist of a lecture and discussion on political issues of the day and were frequently held in public houses, places in which many women, particularly those of the older generation, felt uncomfortable. Women's meetings, held in the evenings or frequently in the afternoons, were addressed primarily by women speakers talking about women's issues. In 1924 the SPD's women's organisation realized that women preferred to have a mixture of culture, entertainment and political enlightenment at these meetings and in the late 1920s the KPD, too, began to include entertainment within its meetings or to hold 'coffee and cake afternoons'.¹³ In the late 1920s the SPD, KPD and NSDAP began to show slides and propaganda films at their meetings and though these did not reach a wide audience, they were popular.¹⁴

By the later years of the Weimar Republic gender-specific demonstrations and rallies became the favoured means of the SPD and KPD to win women voters and these were often focussed on an issue of concern to working-class women, such as abortion or the struggle against fascism. These demonstrations were thought to be more attractive to younger women as older women were thought to prefer smaller, indoor women's meetings. In February 1931 over 3,000 women attended the Hamburg SPD's first women's anti-Nazi mass meeting to which men were not admitted.¹⁵ As Karen Hagemann has shown, women's exclusion from numerous political events brought about in the early years of the Republic by the location and content of the parties' meetings and demonstrations, became greater with the militarisation and increasing use of violence in political life which, in turn, merely increased the need for the segregation of public political activities in which women could participate.¹⁶ Both Richard Bessel and Thomas Childers have demonstrated that the use of violence was a fundamental part of the Nazis' mobilisation strategy and in the early 1930s Germany's streets became a battle-ground as the parties' paramilitary wings, with their uniforms, flags and insignia, fought for supremacy.¹⁷ German women were for the most part excluded from this militarisation of German political life, though in 1932 the KPD made much of a violent attack on a young Communist woman by SA men.¹⁸ Members of the KPD's organisation, the Red Women and Girls' League, wore a uniform and marched in military formation and the members of the Nazi Women's Association also had their own uniform and insignia. Nazi women also attempted to disrupt the women's meetings held by other parties.

German women were showered with printed matter prior to the elections to the National Assembly, as parties which had refused to support the call for female

suffrage were quick to welcome women into political life. The female turnout for the elections to the National Assembly would indicate that the propaganda campaign to get women to vote was successful, though whether women went to their polls in response to the propaganda campaign launched by both women's groups and the political parties, because of the 'novelty' value of the vote, because they were aware of the serious situation in which the country found itself or because they were keen to do their duty cannot be ascertained. The percentage of women eligible to vote who made use of their right exceeded that of men in some areas where provision was made for men and women to vote separately, but on the whole it is estimated that the female turnout at 82.3% was just lower than the male turnout at 82.4%, the smallest difference in the male and female turnout recorded in the Weimar Republic.¹⁹ Figures reveal that there was a low turnout among men under 25 as they were perhaps imprisoned abroad or still in uniform and making their way home. The figures also reveal that younger women were more likely to have made use of their vote than older women, and that women in the towns and cities also made greater use of their right to vote than did women in the country.²⁰ Older women living in the country could, therefore, be seen to be harder to mobilise than younger, urban women.

Childers has noted that each political party speedily adopted its own political language and imagery to distinguish itself from its rivals in the most significant medium of the Weimar Republic – print, and that they targeted their appeals at clearly defined occupational groups.²¹ How did the parties formulate their appeals to women voters, the majority of whom were housewives and whose status in society came from their husbands or male head of household? Printed matter included leaflets, pamphlets and posters during election campaigns, but it is from the brochures

detailing the parties' views on women's issues or describing the activities of their female politicians and the reprints of the parties' petitions to the Reichstag relating to women's concerns throughout the Weimar Republic that the parties' attitudes to women's role in society can best be gleaned.

These brochures reveal that the three socialist parties, the SPD, USPD and the KPD, demanded the recognition of women's equal right to work, equal pay for equal work, equal educational opportunities, equal unemployment benefits and better worker protection for women. However, the SPD was a party to the demobilisation decrees at the war's end and it voted in favour of the dismissal of married female civil servants in 1932. The KPD was the only party to vote against this law, but it also voted against the 1927 law governing the employment of women before and after childbirth because it did not consider its provisions extensive enough. Both the SPD and USPD called for equal legal status between men and women. All the socialist parties wished for contraceptive devices to be readily available and whereas the SPD campaigned for a reduction in the penalties defined in the paragraphs relating to abortion in the penal code, the USPD and KPD both favoured their abrogation. The SPD supported the introduction of divorce on the grounds of irreconcilable differences, whereas the KPD believed marriage should be seen as a private contract.²² The right-liberal DVP, in its guiding principles of 1919, advocated the political, economic and legal equality of the sexes. It gave its full support and recognition to the work of woman as mothers and rearers of the next generation.²³ It did not support married women's right to work, the DVP fraction in the Berlin City Council calling in 1930 for the dismissal of all the city's married women civil servants and white-collar workers whose husbands earned a normal wage.²⁴ The DDP allowed its Reichstag delegate, Dr. Marie-

Elisabeth Lüders, to champion the rights of professional women, especially civil servants, and the DStP, the DDP's successor party, abstained from voting on the law to dismiss married women civil servants in 1932. Both the DDP and the DVP said little on the issues of abortion or contraception but it was Marie-Elisabeth Lüders who led the campaign for divorce reform, supported by her party and the DVP. The Centre Party's guiding principles of 1918 called for woman's participation in all areas which were deemed to be in accordance with her feminine nature.²⁵ It did not believe implicitly in women's right to work and it instigated the law to dismiss married female civil servants in 1932. The Catholic Church regarded abortion as murder and was steadfastly and vociferously opposed to any form of contraception or reform of the divorce laws.²⁶ The DNVP's guidelines on women's issues called for equal pay for work of equal value and equal employment and promotion opportunities, though it did nothing to help turn these pronouncements into fact. The DNVP believed that 'the German woman is indispensable as the guardian of the moral and religious foundations of family life and of the nation'. It was fundamentally opposed to any relaxation in the abortion or divorce laws and called upon the Reichstag to introduce measures to combat the fall in the birth-rate.²⁷ The NSDAP had no agreed guidelines on its position on women's role in society and the only reference to women in the Nazi Party programme of 24 February 1920 was in connection with the protection of mothers and children (point 21) as part of its plan to improve the nation's health.²⁸ The party published no brochures detailing its views on women's role. What was written came from female adherents of Nazism or as brief parts of larger works, by Hitler, Rosenberg and Darre.²⁹ The lack of clear policy guidelines allowed some flexibility in Nazi views on women's role in employment. While Gregor Strasser promised working women equality in the

National Socialist state, Hermann Esser said that the Nazis would remove all women and girls from every public office and job. The view was also propounded that women's employment should be restricted to those areas specially suited to women's nature and their role as mothers. The Nazis were prominent in the campaign against married working women in the early 1930s, calling for the dismissal of all married working women and their replacement by men who could do their work.³⁰ Nazi views on the primacy of women's role as mothers and preservers of the purity of the German race never wavered, however. The NSDAP did not support any relaxation in the abortion laws and even called for anyone who tried artificially to impede the natural fertility of the German race, by abortion or contraception, to be imprisoned for treason.³¹ Alone of the political parties the NSDAP refused to allow women to hold positions of leadership or to represent it at any level. The Nazis believed strongly in separate spheres for men and women: politics, the military and the judiciary were not thought suitable spheres for women. Women's sphere was primarily within the home and family and one Nazi woman expressed the view that the role of housewife should be recognised as a profession.³²

In their electoral propaganda the political parties tended to appeal to women in the roles as wife and mother, addressing social and cultural issues, though the working woman was not totally ignored, particularly by the KPD, SPD and DDP. The number of leaflets aimed at women soon fell after 1918, perhaps because of financial constraints, or the targeting of new groups, especially young people in the late 1920s and early 1930s, or because the parties believed that such propaganda was not necessary to mobilise the female vote. Electoral campaign leaflets tended to contain closely typed text on A4 paper, often coloured. Key words and phrases would appear

in bold in larger print. A minority of the leaflets contained illustrations, frequently with caricature representations of other parties. In the first two elections of the Weimar Republic the leaflets included at the end an application form for party membership. This practice was also used by the National Socialist Freedom Party in the December 1924 election, with applicants having to sign that they were of German blood.³³ The electoral leaflets and pamphlets aimed at women were usually written by women, whereas the parties tended to employ graphic designers to design their election posters, some of which were reproduced as postcards. The socialist parties had some notable artists to call upon, for example Käthe Kollwitz or John Heartfield, while the NSDAP bemoaned its lack of notable poster designers.³⁴ Gerhard Paul has noted that in urban areas election campaigns were fought primarily by posters and meetings. He refers to 'the poster war' during every Weimar election campaign. In addition to hoardings on walls and kiosks and advertising columns posters were also displayed on election lorries and by men with sandwich boards. Whereas people could easily discard leaflets, posters were permanently visible, although Goebbels believed that they lost their effectiveness after eight days.³⁵ Most posters were aimed at the electorate in general with a minority being targeted at women. While these posters can give insight into the parties' views on how they felt the women's vote could be won, it is impossible to determine their impact on women (or men). Not only do we not know whether posters, or any form of propaganda aimed at women played any role in persuading women to vote for any given party, we also do not know whether women were more susceptible to the general political posters and propaganda of the parties than to the gender-specific ones. While it is relatively easy to detect some of the subliminal messages in the parties' election posters – the use of different kinds of script or colour, for example the SPD and DDP tended to use the

colours black, red and gold, whereas the DNVP and, increasingly the DVP, used the imperial colours of black, red and white – it is more difficult to pick up some of the allusions to Germany's cultural heritage.

In 1918/1919 the SPD's poster stressed its belief in 'equal rights and equal duties' and throughout the Weimar Republic the SPD in its posters appealed to women in a variety of guises – young working woman, wife, mother and responsible citizen.³⁶ In its leaflets the SPD emphasised its commitment to women's rights and promised better education and better worker protection. With the loss of 5 million votes between the elections to the National Assembly and the 1920 Reichstag election and the fall in the number of women party members and of women in the trades union movement, the SPD reviewed the organisation of women's meetings and in 1924 the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts* began to publish a weekly supplement entitled *Die Wählerin* ('The Female Voter') during election campaigns. In 1927 the women's organisation decided to target women factory workers, believing that the party's current structures for factory agitation among women were insufficient as the party's representatives in factories were overwhelmingly male and they spent very little time trying to win women for the party. Throughout the Weimar Republic young working women were particularly hard to win, as they now had available to them a range of cultural and leisure activities, such as going to the cinema or dances, and were not as dependent on the SPD as their parents and grandparents had been for providing cultural and group activities.³⁷

In 1930 it is likely that the SPD slogan 'Work for the father! Bread for the children!' found favour among women.³⁸ The theme of work and bread was subsequently

adopted in 1932 by the Centre Party, DVP and the NSDAP. Although the Nazis had begun to disrupt SPD meetings in late 1929, the SPD women's leader, Marie Juchacz, never once referred to them in an election speech in Hanover. However, with the success of the NSDAP at the polls in September 1930, when it polled 18.3% of the vote and won 107 seats to become the second-largest party, the SPD's women's organisation turned its attention to raising awareness of Nazi attitudes towards women. In December 1930 it published a poster entitled 'Women, this is what will happen to you in the Third Reich' depicting a woman on her knees tying the bootlaces of a Nazi holding a whip. (See illustration 1.) It called upon women to fight the Nazis by joining the Social Democrats. Similar posters followed, but were not part of any election campaign. The SPD women's section produced a slide lecture on Nazism and in 1931 the largest number of women's meetings were held by the SPD since 1919, with 12% of its local organisations having film or slide evenings.³⁹ In February 1932 the SPD produced a 227-page book entitled 'National Socialism and Women's Issues. Material for Information and Use in the Struggle'.⁴⁰ In a 1932 electoral leaflet in which the SPD claimed that 'the German woman fights for a democratic Germany in the ranks of the SPD', the SPD criticised both the NSDAP and the KPD. In a leaflet for the Prussian *Landtag* election in April 1932, the SPD depicted a before and after scenario, with the Nazis courting women's votes and then throwing women out of politics. Women were reminded that they were in the majority and that the Nazis believed that blue- and white-collar women workers had no right to work. Mothers were told that the Nazis needed the masses for mass murder in a future war, whereas a victory for the SPD would mean an extension of women's rights, consolidation of peace and the education of young people to aid

reconciliation between nations.⁴¹ In the Reichstag elections of 1932 women were

exhorted to vote SPD for freedom, welfare and peace or for freedom, work and peace.⁴²

Throughout the Weimar Republic the SPD, with few exceptions, gained a higher share of the male than of the female vote, though the difference between the two narrowed. One reason offered for this decrease is that working-class men transferred their vote to the KPD.⁴³ The difference between the shares of the male and female votes going to the KPD was the largest of all the major political parties in the Weimar Republic. The party with the most radical platform on women's issues benefited least from women's suffrage.

The KPD in its election leaflets and the pamphlets it produced between elections called unceasingly for equal pay for equal work, better worker protection for working mothers and a revocation of the laws concerning abortion. It praised the Soviet Union for its policies on women. There were few women-specific posters during the Weimar Republic, though depictions of women were frequently to be found in *Die Kommunistin* and the illustrated *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung*. Eric Weitz writes of the party 'lurching from one image to another in the search for the way to appeal to women'.⁴⁴ A December 1924 poster of a haggard mother holding her baby with an emaciated child clutching her with a message that only the KPD was fighting for an end to the abortion laws is indicative of the many portrayals, several by Käthe Kollwitz, of downtrodden mothers that permeated the KPD's written publications. A

1930 poster provides another image – that of the healthy young woman, left arm held aloft in a call to arms.⁴⁵ The language used in KPD propaganda tended to be militaristic and the front page of its general women's magazine, *Der Weg der Frau*, continued this military theme in October 1932 with a depiction of a mother wearing a gas mask putting a nappy on her baby, also wearing a gas mask, with the heading 'In the Third Reich every woman will have a man'.⁴⁶

In its written propaganda the KPD did not portray women's work outside the home as an unremitting joy but stressed the low wages, long working hours and lack of protection. While this kind of propaganda can be understood from the perspective of trying to win working women by advocating equal pay for equal work, such depictions can hardly have encouraged women to want to go out to work, which, according to Marxist theory, was a prerequisite for women's emancipation. The KPD had probably the most centrally directed organisation of all the parties for attempting to win women as members and voters. However, throughout the Weimar Republic there were complaints that not enough was being done to win women for the party, especially by men.⁴⁷ The KPD tried a variety of methods to try and attract women. In 1924 a three-pronged campaign was suggested for the elections: housewives could be approached while out shopping for food, and women workers in the factories. Mothers could be won over by the campaign against the abortion laws. In 1925 the KPD set up the Red Women and Girls' League and, according to Arendt, it became the KPD's main instrument for agitation among working-class women in the middle years of the Weimar Republic.⁴⁸ The KPD also set up the women's delegates movement, one woman being elected to represent 50 women at each meeting, to be held in factories and dole queues.⁴⁹ However, this targeting of women in factories

and dole queues meant that the majority of women were ignored. Therefore, some areas decided to hold women's evenings, mixing entertainment and a lecture or hold 'coffee and cake afternoons'.⁵⁰ The KPD and particularly its organisation, The Working Group of Social Welfare Organisations, was instrumental in setting up the mass movement against the abortion laws which took to the streets in 1931 but the KPD, concerned about a large organisation of women it could not control, proved itself organisationally and ideologically unable to rise to the challenge of converting them to the party.⁵¹

Separate voting statistics reveal that the DDP received a marginally higher share of the male than of the female vote, in spite of the party's proud proclamation in 1918/1919 that it was 'the party of women'. Its posters stressed its belief in women's rights and it produced a plethora of leaflets aimed at urban women: housewives, domestic servants, white- and blue-collar workers, women teachers and civil servants, promising women better working conditions and improvements in their promotion prospects.⁵² In its posters after 1919 the DDP abandoned the call for women's rights and appealed to German women as mothers, though in its leaflets it continued to address women's rights issues, especially those of working women. By 1930 the DDP's successor party, the DStP, was urging women to vote for calm and order. The DStP stood for recovery, not destruction, peace not civil war, unity not fragmentation, the people's community not the class struggle.⁵³ In 1932 it directly criticised the NSDAP's policy on women. A double-sided leaflet had caricatures of Hitler, Feder, Goebbels and Strasser quoting them and exhorting German women and girls to defend their womanhood, their family, their children, their dignity and their rights as a human

being and a citizen.⁵⁴ By 1932, however, the DStP had become almost insignificant in electoral terms, as had the other liberal party, the DVP.

In its leaflets to women the DVP stressed its commitment to preserving Christian and patriotic ideals and to protecting German Christian family life. It claimed to be 'the party of the German family' and also called for respect for women's rights and women's work in the family and employment.⁵⁵ In 1932 it produced an anti-Nazi booklet and drew attention to Nazi policies on women in public life. It called upon women to vote DVP to ensure that women continued to have influence in public life and employment. The DVP also promised work and bread for the German people and the maintenance of order and high standards in public life in the German state.⁵⁶

Statistics from the districts where men and women voted separately reveal that the DVP received a marginally higher share of the female vote than the male.⁵⁷ The one constant in DVP propaganda aimed at women is its emphasis on the German Christian family, an emphasis shared by the DNVP, whose propaganda also contained a more nationalist ethos.

Throughout the Weimar Republic the DNVP consistently polled a higher share of the female than of the male vote in Protestant areas.⁵⁸ The DNVP based its propaganda for women on the twin pillars of religion and nationalism as two posters clearly illustrate: one in 1928 depicts a grandmother and her granddaughter praying together; the other, in 1932, shows an older and a younger woman standing each side of the imperial flag under the heading 'German Women, German Loyalty', a phrase from the National Anthem that appeared in DNVP propaganda throughout the Republic.⁵⁹ In its poster for the National Assembly elections the DNVP called upon women to

‘wake up and do your duty. The election will determine Germany’s and your children’s future. Help to save them. Vote German National’ (See illustration 2.) In 1918/1919 and in the 1920s the DNVP addressed its written propaganda at a range of women – country women, housewives, white-collar workers, civil servants - and praised German women as the guardians of the German home, the German-Christian family and Christian marriage. It stressed its support for religion, the home, freedom, law and order.⁶⁰ There is a noticeable absence of DNVP electoral material aimed specifically at women after 1928 though in 1932 it produced an anti-Nazi leaflet.⁶¹

The Centre Party was the party that benefited most from female suffrage throughout the Weimar Republic. In its posters targeting women it depicted an idealised vision of mother and child, against the background of a cross. The Centre Party’s sister party in Bavaria, the BVP, shared this tendency, though here the blue and white colours of Bavaria were prominent.⁶² In its written propaganda the Centre Party called upon Christian women to preserve the Christian family and protect Christian schools and charitable organisations. It preached the sanctity of marriage and respect for women as wives and mothers and portrayed itself as the bulwark against radicalism. The only reference it made to women’s employment was a promise for better worker protection.⁶³ In 1932 in a leaflet for the Bavarian *Landtag* election, Thusnelda Lang-Brumann, a BVP delegate to the Reichstag, asked ‘What does a sensible woman want with Hitler?’ and drew attention to Nazi pronouncements on women’s role in public life and employment and on religion.⁶⁴ However, the most noticeable thing about Centre Party propaganda aimed at women is the dearth of it. Sneeringer has commented that the Centre Party took women for granted.⁶⁵ The

party was well-aware that Catholic women's organisations and the Catholic Church would mobilise its female voters.

The NSDAP was slow to target female voters and it is generally assumed that it was not until the early 1930s that the Nazis believed that the women's vote would have to be actively won.⁶⁶ Although it produced no leaflets aimed at women in 1928 the party did produce a poster depicting three women, a mother holding her child, a nurse and a

young woman sitting at a desk with the wording 'Mothers, working women, we vote National Socialist'.⁶⁷ No leaflets or posters directly targeting the female vote were produced by the party in the 1930 election, but for the Reich Presidential elections in 1932 it produced at least two, in one of which a woman is depicted holding a baby and standing behind her child and husband, sat at the table with the inscription 'Millions of men without work, millions of children without a future'. Women were exhorted, in Germanic script, to 'save the German family'. In another poster, with a woman holding her hand to her mouth in a gesture of despair, her two children clinging to her, women are asked to think of their children. Hitler as the saviour of the family and Germany was a theme in other Reich Presidential election posters in which figures of women appear: 'Our last hope' (see illustration 3) and 'Against Hunger and Despair'. In the posters for the presidential elections women are seen to be in despair, but in the NSDAP's July 1932 Reichstag election poster we see a drawing of two self-assured, happy women's faces, with the simple inscription 'We women vote list 2 National Socialist'.⁶⁸ The newly created Nazi Women's League also produced a poster in 1932 with a woman and her two children looking towards the swastika sun rising, a church in the background. German women are exhorted to

join together while German girls are told that they belong to the Nazis.⁶⁹ Here national rebirth through the NSDAP is combined with an acceptance of the significance of religion in women's voting patterns. In its leaflets in 1932 the Nazis took issue with the other parties' propaganda concerning their views on women's role in society. One leaflet, for the Reich Presidential elections, stated that the claims that Adolf Hitler wanted to drive women from their jobs and that the Nazis wanted to destroy the family were slanderous lies in the newspapers of the 'system parties'. It goes on to ask a range of women what the parties had done for them over the past thirteen years. Hitler's speech at the Sport Palace was quoted at length in which he claimed that the Nazis regarded women as man's life companion, but it was man's responsibility to ensure that women do not have to work to earn the daily bread and children should be seen as a joy, not a burden. Women were asked to vote for Hitler and thereby rescue their jobs, family and children for the future. In another leaflet, entitled 'What does Hitler want?', we are told that Hitler wants peace, order, thrift and high standards in public life, but not civil war, corruption, inflation, or double-earners, a reference to married working women.⁷⁰ The NSDAP was increasing its appeal to women voters from 1930 onwards so that by 1932 it was polling almost as high a share of the female as of the male vote in Protestant areas, and in Catholic areas the difference between the shares of the male and female vote going to the Nazis was narrowing.⁷¹

This brief overview of party propaganda reveals that the parties of the Weimar Republic which benefited most from female suffrage emphasised women's role within the family and Christian values. The parties' written propaganda reveals finely

nuanced differences in the parties' attitudes to women's issues and in the style and language in which they were expressed. Yet the lack of gender-specific propaganda furnished by the Centre Party, the DNVP after 1928 and the NSDAP before 1932 would suggest that women were not influenced greatly in their voter choice by gender-specific electoral propaganda. Women may have been attracted by a party's electoral propaganda on wider political, economic or foreign policy issues, where its stance may have been more distinctive.

As has been noted, propaganda alone did not mobilise the female vote. Winning women's votes was one of the tasks of the parties' women's committees, although some depended heavily on the help of existing women's organisations, with whom many of the Reich women committee members had links. The dependence of the Centre party on the Catholic women's organisations and the Catholic Church has already been noted. The liberal DDP was able to turn to local middle-class women's associations. The DNVP and to a lesser extent the DVP depended on local protestant women's associations to mobilise women. In early 1919 the chair of the DNVP Reich women's committee, Margarete Behm, wrote to the wives of vicars to ask for their support in getting women to vote DNVP.⁷² The DNVP could also depend on the rural housewives association and nationalist leagues to mobilise women for it, at least until 1930. Thereafter some women in these organisations turned to the NSDAP, as did young protestant women in the youth movement.⁷³ In some areas women from other organisations such as the Königin Luise Bund took part in Nazi rallies.⁷⁴ The NSDAP, believing that politics was a dirty business from which women should remain unsullied, did not have a women's committee and, therefore, had no discrete organisation to entrust with winning women's votes for the party. While in other

parties women worked closely with the male leadership on various issues, including its stance on women's representation, this was not the case within the NSDAP.⁷⁵ The party's female adherents were joined together in various organisations, the best known being Elsbeth Zander's German Women's Order Red Swastika (DFO), founded in Berlin in 1923 and recognised by Hitler in 1926. The Order's aim was to remove women from the turmoil of party politics and to direct them towards social and welfare work and its tasks included running soup kitchens for the party and nursing SA men wounded in skirmishes with political opponents. It came under the direct jurisdiction of the party in 1928 and by December 1930 it was reported to have some 160 branches with around 4,000 members.⁷⁶ Other local Nazi women's groups were set up in the mid-1920s in Plauen, Nuremberg, Kassel, Frankfurt and Hamburg, at the instigation of women, and the failure of the male leadership to co-ordinate women's activities allowed them some degree of independence and autonomy.⁷⁷ It was partly in an attempt to control and co-ordinate women's activities within the party that the Nazi Women's Association (*Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft*, NSF) was set up with effect from 1 October 1931. At all levels the NSF was under control of the male party leadership. Its remit included providing economic help such as soup kitchens, lessons in hygiene, indoctrination of party ideas and in educating German women to buy only German goods. Another of its tasks was to win women's votes for the party. By the spring of 1933 it had founded branches in all Germany's towns and larger villages.⁷⁸

Ian Kershaw has noted that 'the quantity of Nazi propaganda amounted to a qualitative distinction from other bourgeois parties'.⁷⁹ The same might be said of its meetings as in 1930 the Nazis held some 34,000 meetings and in the next two years

held considerably more meetings than the SPD and KPD. Party activity was noted in the partisan press though Paul notes that the NSDAP achieved more success at the polls when it received favourable comments in the bourgeois press.⁸⁰

Childers claims that in 1932 the Nazi propaganda leadership inundated women with political literature emphasising religious and cultural themes and that this propaganda was successful in mobilising women for the party, especially in Protestant areas.⁸¹

However, as it is clear that gender-specific electoral propaganda did not play a decisive role in female voter choice, other elements must have played a part in a woman's decision to vote for the NSDAP. Some historians have referred to Hitler's charismatic appeal for women, citing Rauschning's description of 'front seat women' with 'their expression of rapturous self-surrender, their moist and glistening eyes'.⁸²

The presence of women at Hitler's rallies had been noted by the police in the 1920s. When Hitler spoke in Heidelberg for the first time on 6 August 1927 there were 1,000 women in his audience of 2,500.⁸³ However, had only women voted in the Reich Presidential elections in 1932, Hindenburg would have won in the first round.⁸⁴ The NSDAP's attraction for women cannot have centred on Hitler alone, though contemporary observers noted Hitler's ability to 'address each member of his audience separately' and to 'deal with many of the grievances familiar to workaday people' in readily understandable language.⁸⁵ Attendance at a Hitler rally in the early 1930s was an event, judged well worth the cost of admission, with its singing, marching, flags, military music and Hitler, portrayed as the one man who could save Germany and lead them to the promised land of the Third Reich.⁸⁶ Very few women who voted NSDAP would have heard Hitler speak. It has been noted that men followed the example set by local notables in joining the party and the leaders of Nazi

women's groups in Baden, for example, were wives of respected middle-class men and the wives and daughters of local landowners and business magnates were seen at Hitler's rallies.⁸⁷

Renate Bridenthal believes that the Weimar Republic failed to bring women emancipation and tentatively suggests that a Nazi vote might be seen as one rejecting women's supposed economic emancipation.⁸⁸ This view resonates with the Nazis' claim to 'emancipate women from emancipation' and to emancipate women from employment, not from men.⁸⁹ Leila Rupp believes that the NSDAP was attractive to women because it shared their belief in the importance of their role as wives and mothers and Childers, too, believes that women were drawn to Nazism by its antimodernism and espousal of the three Ks of *Kinder, Kirche, Küche*.⁹⁰ Stephenson believes that Hitler's promise of a husband for every woman and a job for every husband was attractive to young women in monotonous factory or clerical work.⁹¹ William Brustein has emphasized the part played by the NSDAP's coherent and innovative programmes for tackling the economic crisis in attracting voters and Marit Berntson and Brian Ault have argued that these would have been attractive to single, middle-class women, drawn by the promise to remove married women from paid employment, freeing up the employment market for them.⁹²

These possible reasons for women's support for Nazism highlight material self-interest. Richard Evans, however, thinks women voted NSDAP because they wanted to see the destruction of the Weimar Republic.⁹³ Michael Phayer sees an attraction for Protestant middle-class women in Nazi calls for national renewal, under Hitler's leadership, and in the NSDAP's support for pronatalism and mothercare services.⁹⁴

Others have referred to the appeal of the Nazis' nationalism. As one upper middle-class woman from Hamburg noted: '... every person who thinks and feels as a German, the bourgeois, the farmer, the aristocrat, the prince, the intelligentsia, stands by Hitler. It is the nationalist movement.'⁹⁵ Elizabeth Harvey has noted that the growth of nationalism among young protestant women in the early 1930s, coupled with the Nazis' emphasis on the role of women as wives and mothers, and their fight against decadent Weimar culture, led young protestant women to support Nazism.⁹⁶

It is impossible to determine why German women voted for the NSDAP. Women may have been drawn in by the global image created by the NSDAP's electoral propaganda, meetings, marches, paramilitary units, flags and symbols, or by the party's stand on a particular aspect or aspects.⁹⁷ They may have been following the example set by their husbands or male head of household. Which women were susceptible to Nazism?

Ian Kershaw has noted that the NSDAP was the only party to successfully corner the right-wing vote.⁹⁸ It benefited from the collapse of the liberal parties and won votes from the DNVP. It also, however, won voters from the SPD and first-time voters. Childers has referred to the NSDAP as a 'catch-all party', and it was a party to which all women, regardless of class, were susceptible unless they were staunch Catholics, especially in the countryside, or committed ideologically to another party or affiliated to the labour movement.⁹⁹ Evans has noted the prominence of women in those groups which are known to have supported the NSDAP, older voters such as pensioners, but it is clear that, by 1932, the NSDAP was attracting votes from protestant women of all classes, young and old, in towns and in the countryside.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that before 1932 the NSDAP was attracting women's votes without targeting women as an electoral group. It did not actively seek to win the female vote until 1932 when it not only realised the significance of women's votes but it was also forced to repudiate the propaganda of other parties concerning its views on women's role in employment and public life. The concentration of all the other parties on attacking the NSDAP's purported policies on women meant, as Julia Sneeringer has noted, that women's rights became in 1932 an election issue for the first time since the beginning of the Republic.¹⁰¹ The way in which millions of women cast their vote ensured that women's rights would not be on the electoral agenda again for some considerable time.

¹ N.H. Baynes, *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler 1922-1939*, Oxford, 1942, p. 530.

² As women were in the majority of the electorate, however, this did not mean that the NSDAP received a higher share of the female than of the male vote. See Helen L. Boak, "'Our Last Hope; Women's Votes for Hitler – A Reappraisal', *German Studies Review*, 12, 1989, pp.289-310. In two Bavarian strongholds, Ansbach and Dinkelsbühl, the NSDAP did poll 50% or more of women's votes in November 1932 and March 1933: *Zeitschrift des bayerischen statistischen Landesamtes*, 63, 1931, pp. 93-4; 65, 1933, pp. 103-4.

³ Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter. The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1933*, Chapel Hill and London, 1983; Daniela Janusch, *Die plakative Propaganda der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands zu den Reichstagswahlen 1928 bis 1932*, Bochum, 1989; Gerhard Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder. Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933*, Bonn, 1990.

⁴ Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes. Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany*, Chapel Hill and London, 2002, based on her doctoral thesis: "The Political Mobilization of Women in Weimar Germany, 1918-1932", University of Pennsylvania, 1995.

⁵Richard Bessel, 'The Rise of the NSDAP and the Myth of Nazi Propaganda', *Wiener Library Bulletin*, 33, 1980, pp. 20-9.

⁶ Oded Heilbornner, 'The Failure that Succeeded: Nazi Party Activity in a Catholic Region in Germany, 1929-32', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27, 1992, pp. 531-49.

⁷ Ian Kershaw, 'Ideology, Propaganda, and the Rise of the Nazi Party', in Peter D. Stachura, *The Nazi Machtergreifung*, London, 1983, pp. 162-81.

⁸ *Reichsgesetzblatt 1918*, no. 153, 12 November 1918, p.1304. Kurt Eisner had proclaimed female suffrage in Bavaria on 7 November 1918: *Die Frau im Staat*, 10:11, November 1918, p.1.

⁹ On the parties' women's groupings and their role see Helen Boak, 'Women in Weimar Politics', *European History Quarterly*, 20, 1990, pp. 369-99. On the KPD see BAK, R45IV/17, p. 19ff and 'Frauenarbeit ist nicht Arbeit der Frauen der Partei, sondern Arbeit der Partei unter den Frauen', in Forschungsgemeinschaft Geschichte des Kampfes der deutschen Arbeiterklasse um die Befreiung der Frau, *Dokumente der revolutionären deutschen Arbeiterbewegung zur Frauenfrage 1848-1974*, Leipzig, 1975, pp. 98-100.

¹⁰ Kate Lacey, 'From *Plauderei* to Propaganda: on women's radio in Germany, 1924-35', *Media, Culture and Society*, 16, 1994, pp. 589-607. Paul notes that the Brüning cabinet permitted party propaganda on the radio for the July 1932 election. Hitler was not, however, heard on the radio until after January 30 1933: Paul, *Aufstand*, p. 196.

¹¹ Additionally, some 2,987,011 women were widowed or divorced, of whom 623 were under 20. Of the married women, 790,598 were employed outside the home in blue- or white-collar work; of the widowed and divorced 380,859. Some 3,645,326 married women were classed as employed, 2,501,335 as family helpers, 309,160 as independent workers (primarily homeworkers) and 44,233 as domestic servants: calculated from figures in *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das deutsche Reich 1932*, pp. 12-3; *Statistik des deutschen Reiches*, 402, pp. 452-3. There were 18,769,662 men over 20.

¹² Karen Hagemann, 'Men's Demonstrations and Women's Protest: Gender in Collective Action in the Urban Working-class Milieu in the Weimar Republic', *Gender and History*, 5, 1993, pp. 101-19.

¹³ Karen Hagemann, *Frauenalltag und Männerpolitik. Alltagsleben und gesellschaftliches Handeln von Arbeiterfrauen in der Weimarer Republik*, Bonn, 1990, pp.539-41, 563; Adelheid von Saldern, 'Modernization as Challenge. Perceptions and Reactions of German Social Democratic Women', in H. Gruber and P. Graves, *Women and Socialism*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 95-134; Karen Hagemann, "Equal but

not the same”: the Social Democratic Women’s Movement in the Weimar Republic’, in Roger Fletcher (ed.), *Bernstein to Brandt. A Short History of German Social Democracy*, London, 1987, pp.133-43; Eric D. Weitz, *Creating German Communism, 1890-1990. From Popular Protests to Socialist State*, Princeton, 1996, pp. 221, 223-4; Atina Grossmann, ‘German Communism and New Women. Dilemmas and Contradictions’, in Huber and Graves, *Socialism*, pp.135-68.

¹⁴ James Wickham, ‘Working-class movement and working-class life: Frankfurt am Main during the Weimar Republic,’ *Social History*, 8, 1983, pp. 315-343; Paul, *Aufstand*, pp.187-94; Janusch, *Propaganda*, pp. 35-6.

¹⁵ Hagemann, *Alltag*, pp. 546-7

¹⁶ Hagemann, ‘Demonstrations’, pp. 105, 107-9.

¹⁷ Richard Bessel, ‘Violence as Propaganda: The Role of the Storm Troopers in the Rise of National Socialism’, in Thomas Childers (ed), *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency 1919-1933*, Totowa, 1986, pp. 131-46; Thomas Childers, ‘Voters and Violence. Political Violence and the Limits of National Socialist Mass Mobilization’, *German Studies Review*, 13, 1990, pp. 481-98.

¹⁸ Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), Z.Sg. 2088, ‚Arbeitende Frauen und Mädchen’; Sneeringer, *Winning*, pp. 256-7.

¹⁹ In Bremen 79.8% of men and 87.7% of women made use of their vote, in Baden 89.2% of men and 83.7% of women: R.Hartwig, ‘Wie die Frauen im Deutschen Reich von ihrem politischen Wahlrecht Gebrauch machen’, *Allgemeines Statistisches Archiv*, 17, 1928, pp. 497-512. Hofmann-Göttig’s figures reveal that 14,572,345 women out of 17,710,872 eligible voters did so (82.3%); for men these figures were 12,572,345 out of 15,051,114, highlighting the fact that women were in the majority of the electorate and that a lower female turnout, or share of the vote, did not necessarily mean the actual number of women voting was smaller than the number of men: Joachim Hoffmann-Göttig, *Emanzipation mit dem Stimmzettel. 70 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland*, Bonn, 1986, pp. 27-8.

²⁰ In Mannheim, for example, 69.2% of eligible male voters aged 20 did so, as did 78.6% of men aged 21-25 and 86.3% of men over 25. For women these figures were 78.4%, 78.2% and 81.5% respectively: Hartwig, ‘Frauen’, pp. 502-5.

²¹ Thomas Childers, ‘The Social Language of Politics in Germany: the Sociology of Political Discourse in the Weimar Republic’, *The American Historical Review*, 95:2, 1990, pp. 331-58; idem, ‘Languages of Liberalism: Liberal Political Discourse in the Weimar Republic’, in Konrad H. Jarausch and Larry

Eugene Jones, *In Search of Liberal Germany. Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present*, Oxford, 1990, pp. 323-59.

²² *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der SPD*, Weimar, 1919, p.465, Görlitz, 1921, p.15, Heidelberg, 1925, p. 8, Magdeburg, 1929, p.235; *Die Gleichheit*, 29:14, 1919, p. 105; *Die Kommunistin*, 3:6, 1921, pp. 41-2; BAK, Z.Sg.1. 65/77, 'Frauen im Kampf um Brot und Freiheit'; BAK, Z.Sg.1.91/7, proceedings of the USPD's women's conference held in Leipzig, November 29-30, 1919, pp. 518-21; Zentrale der KPD, *Referentenmaterial. Mutter und Kind in Deutschland und Russland*, Berlin, 1926, pp.14-15; Ernst Kahn, *Der internationale Geburtenstreik*, Berlin, 1930, p.69. Various divorce petitions found in BAK, Nachlass Lüders 232. On the law to dismiss married female civil servants see Helen Boak, 'The State as an Employer of Women in the Weimar Republic', in W R Lee and E Rosenhaft (eds), *The State and Social Change in Germany 1880-1980*, Oxford, 1990, pp. 61-98.

²³ BAK, R45II/62, pp. 109-24, 'Grundsätze der DVP'.

²⁴ BAK, Nachlass Lüders 135, press-cutting from the 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' of 3 December 1930.

²⁵ BAK, Z.Sg.1.108/7, pamphlets entitled 'Zentrum und neue Zeit' and 'Zentrum und politische Neuordnung'.

²⁶ 'Die christliche Ehe. Enzyklika des Papstes Pius XI vom 31. Dezember 1930', *Archiv für Bevölkerungsfragen*, 1, 1931, pp. 24-56.

²⁷ BAK, Z.Sg.1.44/8, 'Richtlinien der Deutschnationalen Volkspartei für Frauenfragen'. DNVP petition of 7 March 1928 found in BAK, Nachlass Lüders 233. Scheck says that the DNVP reviewed its guidelines in 1933: Raffael Scheck, 'Women on the Weimar Right: The Role of Female Politicians in the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP)', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36, 2001, pp. 547-60.

²⁸ Roderick Stackelberg and Sally A. Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook*, London and New York, 2002, pp. 63-6.

²⁹ Hans-Jürgen Arendt, Sabine Hering, Leonie Wagner (eds), *Nationalsozialistische Frauenpolitik vor 1933*, Frankfurt am Main, 1995, pp. 19-22.

³⁰ Sofia Rabe, *Die Frau im nationalsozialistischen Staat*, Munich, 1932, pp. 9-12; petition no. 408 to the Prussian Landtag found in Archiv des ADLV, packet 16.

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- ³¹ Wilhelm Frick, *Die Nationalsozialisten im Reichstag 1924-1931*, Munich, 1932, p.63ff; Leila Rupp, 'Mother of the Volk: The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology', *Signs*, 3, 1977, pp. 362-79.
- ³² Arendt, Hering and Wagner, *Frauenpolitik*, pp. 30-1; Rabe, *Frau*, p. 7.
- ³³ Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), Z.Sg 240, leaflet entitled 'Deutsche Männer und Frauen Gross-Berlins!'
- ³⁴ Paul, *Aufstand*, pp. 151-2.
- ³⁵ Berlin had 3,000 hoardings and there were almost 31,000 in another 2,423 German towns. Paul, *Aufstand*, pp. 96, 151ff.
- ³⁶ A range of SPD posters is to be found on the website of the Archiv der Sozialdemokratie, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung at <http://www.fes.de/archiv>.
- ³⁷ Hagemann, *Frauenalltag*, pp.539-41, 563; Adelheid von Saldern, 'Modernization', p. 120.
- ³⁸ Janusch, *Propaganda*, pp. 122-4; Paul, *Aufstand*, p. 247. The same slogan was used in the 1932 Prussian *Landtag* election: Thomas Friedrich, *Berlin. A Photographic Portrait of the Weimar Years 1918-1933*, London, 1991, p. 224.
- ³⁹ Hagemann, *Alltag*, pp. 546-7; Harsch, *Democracy*, pp. 67,83
- ⁴⁰ BAK, Z.Sg.1.90/43.
- ⁴¹ LAB, Z.Sg. 2088, leaflets entitled 'Wir Wählerinnen sind die Mehrheit in der Nation', 'Mütter'; BAK, Z.Sg.1.90/41, 'Die deutsche Frau kämpft für ein demokratisches Deutschland in den Reihen der SPD'. In another leaflet it reminded female workers in agriculture and the wives of male agricultural workers that women formed the majority of the electorate and their vote would be decisive.
- ⁴² Childers, *Voter*, p.289; Evangelisches Zentralarchiv, Berlin (EZA), 1565/94; leaflet entitled 'Frauen Mütter' found at <http://library.fes.de/library/netzquelle/rechtsextremismus/plak11.html>
- ⁴³ Boak, 'Hope', p. 293.
- ⁴⁴ Weitz, *Creating*, p. 205.
- ⁴⁵ Karen Hagemann and Jan Kolossa, *Gleiche Rechte – Gleiche Pflichten?*, Hamburg, 1990, p.68; Karen Hagemann (ed.), *Eine Frauensache. Alltagsleben und Geburtenpolitik 1919-1933*, Pfaffenweiler, 1991, p. 115.
- ⁴⁶ Silvia Kontos, *Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann*, Frankfurt am Main and Basle, 1979, p.62.
- ⁴⁷ See footnote 9 and 'Die Arbeit unter den Frauen', in Institut für Marxistische Studien und Forschungen, *Arbeiterbewegung und Frauenemanzipation 1889 bis 1933*, Frankfurt am Main, 1973, pp. 69-71.

⁴⁸ Hans-Jürgen Arendt and Werner Freigang, 'Der Rote Frauen- und Mädchenbund – die revolutionäre deutsche Frauenorganisation in der Weimarer Republik', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, 21, 1979, pp. 249-58.

⁴⁹ Forschungsgemeinschaft Geschichte des Kampfes der deutschen Arbeiterklasse um die Befreiung der Frau, *Die Frau und die Gesellschaft*, Leipzig, 1974, pp. 97-100; Hans-Jürgen Arendt, 'Das Reichskomitee werktätiger Frauen 1919-32', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, 23, 1918, pp. 743-48.

⁵⁰ Atina Grossmann writes of Helene Overlach, the leader of the Reich women's bureau from 1927 and a KPD delegate in the Reichstag from 1928 to 1933 taking her own brochures round the yards of Berlin tenement buildings, her guitar strapped to her back: Atina Grossmann, 'Communism', p. 152; Weitz, *Creating*, p. 224.

⁵¹ Grossmann, 'Communism', pp. 152-4. On the whole 1931 campaign see Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex. The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform 1920-1950*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 76-106.

⁵² LAB, B/219, 'Das Wahlrecht', B/217, 'Wir demokratischen Frauen!', B/229, 'Deutsche Frauen', B/222, 'Hausangestellte', B/227, 'An die Hausfrauen!', B/196, 'An die Arbeiterinnen!', B/197, 'An die weiblichen Angestellten', B/197, 'An die Lehrerinnen!'. Larry Eugene Jones comments that the DDP distributed 20 million leaflets for the National Assembly elections, of which a quarter were aimed at women: Larry Eugene Jones, *German Liberalism and the Dissolution of the Weimar Party System, 1918-1933*, Chapel Hill and London, 1988, p. 22. Sneeringer found 53 DDP leaflets from 1918-1920 aimed at women: Sneeringer, *Winning*, p.22.

⁵³ LAB, 2088, 'An die deutschen Frauen!; BAK, Z.Sg.1.27/6, 'Frauen aller Stände – wir rufen euch auf!', 'Deutsche! Halt! Rufen wir Frauen'. Childers has noted the DDP was the only political party to attempt to construct a new language of democratic participation in the Weimar Republic: Childers, 'Languages', p. 326.

⁵⁴ LAB, Z.Sg 240. The first page is depicted in Sneeringer, *Winning*, p. 235.

⁵⁵ BAK, Z.Sg.1.42/7, 'Die Frau und die DVP', 'Deutsche Frauen, deutsche Mütter'.

⁵⁶ Elisabeth Schwarzhaupt, *Was hat die Frau vom Nationalsozialismus zu erwarten?*, Berlin, 1932; EZA 1565/94, 'Ein Wort an die Frauen!'

⁵⁷ Bremme, *Rolle*, p. 72.

⁵⁸ Bremme, *Rolle*, p.70.

⁵⁹ Janusch, *Propaganda*, pp.173, 178; Hagemann and Kolossa, *Rechte*, p. 69. Phayer claims that Protestant women were more nationalistic than Catholic women: Michael Phayer, *Protestant and Catholic Women in Nazi Germany*, Detroit, 1990, pp. 35-7.

⁶⁰ LAB, Z.Sg.241/1024 nr.60, 'Die deutsche Frau'; BAP, 62DAF3/695, 'Wir wissen, was wir am 4. Mai zu tun haben, wir deutschen Frauen!', 'Beamtinnen und weibliche Angestellte aller Berufe', 'Wir deutschen Frauen in Stadt und Land', 'Wir Landfrauen', 'Deutsche Frauen'; EZA, 1565/94, 'Deutsche Frauen, was wird aus Euren Kindern?', 'Was sagen die Reichstagswahlen den Arbeiterinnen?', 'Junge Arbeiterin', 'Warum müssen Christen wählen?', 'Schwestern, Hebammen, Wohlfahrtspflegerinnen!', 'Warum wählt die deutsche Frau?'

⁶¹ Sneeringer also notes the lack of material and claims there was just one leaflet, aimed at housewives, in 1930: Sneeringer, *Winning*, pp. 177-9. 1932 leaflet found in BAP, 60Vo2DNVP 490.

⁶² Sneeringer, *Winning*, p.151; Janusch, *Propaganda*, p.189.

⁶³ BAK, Z.Sg.1.108/9, 'Für Ordnung, Ruhe und Sachlichkeit', 'Deutsche Frauen – Wahrheit, Freiheit, Recht'; LAB, B/68, 'Einig und Treu!', 'Deutsche Frauen!'; BAK, Z.Sg.1.108/7 'Der Sozialismus und der Würde der Frau'.

⁶⁴ BAK, Kleine Erwerbungen 65/4, pp. 69-73.

⁶⁵ BAK, Z.Sg.1.108/9, 'Für Ordnung, Ruhe und Sachlichkeit', 'Deutsche Frauen – Wahrheit, Freiheit, Recht'; Sneeringer, *Winning*, p. 92.

⁶⁶ Boak, 'Hope', p. 301; Jill Stephenson, Claudia Koonz, Thomas Childers and Gerhard Paul date the targeting of women voters to 1932: Childers. *Voter*, p. 198; Jill Stephenson, 'National Socialism and Women before 1933', in Stachura, *Machtergreifung*, London, 1983, pp. 33-48; Claudia Koonz, 'Nazi Women before 1933: Rebels against Emancipation', *Social Science Quarterly*, 56, 1976, pp. 553-63; Paul, *Aufstand*, p. 217. Only five of the 168 Nazi posters seen by Paul were directly targeted at women.

⁶⁷ Sneeringer, *Winning*, p. 161.

⁶⁸ Posters to be found in Paul, *Aufstand*.

⁶⁹ Hagemann and Kolossa, *Rechte*, p. 172.

⁷⁰ Leaflets found in LAB, Z.Sg. 2088.

⁷¹ Boak, 'Hope', pp. 298-301.

⁷² BAP, 60Vo2/486, letter dated 6 January 1919.

⁷³ On the Protestant Women's League's mobilisation of women for the National Assembly see Carol Gale Woodfin, "Reluctant Democrats: Women of the Protestant *Frauenhilfe* and Weimar Politics 1918-1933", PhD dissertation, University of Nashville, 1997, pp. 69-70; Nancy Reagin, *A German Women's Movement: Class and Gender in Hanover, 1880-1933*, Chapel Hill and London, 1995, pp. 204, 234; Renate Bridenthal, 'Organized Rural Women and the Conservative Mobilization of the German Countryside in the Weimar Republic', in Larry Eugene Jones and James Retallack, *Between Reform, Reaction and Resistance*, Oxford, 1993, pp. 375-405; Elizabeth Harvey, 'Serving the Volk, Saving the Nation: Women in the Youth Movement and Public Sphere in Weimar Germany', in Jones and Retallack, *Elections*, pp. 201-221.

⁷⁴ This happened in Neulussheim and Karlsruhe in Baden from 1926: Staatsarchiv Freiburg, 317/1257d-e, police report of 1 December 1926; Johnpeter Grill, *The Nazi Party in Baden 1920-1945*, Chapel Hill and London, 1983, p. 223.

⁷⁵ Claudia Koonz, 'Nazi Women', p. 558; for women's attempts to increase the number of women candidates see Boak, 'Weimar Politics', pp. 382-6.

⁷⁶ NSDAP Hauptarchiv, reel 89, folder 1865, frame 80, announcement sheet no. 23 of the Berlin police headquarters of 1 December 1930. On the German Women's Order see Jill Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women*, London, 1981, pp. 23-58.

⁷⁷ Michael H. Kater, 'Frauen in der NS-Bewegung', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 31:2, 1983, pp. 202-41; Koonz, 'Nazi Women', p. 558; idem, 'The Competition for a Women's Lebensraum, 1928-1934', in Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann and Marion Kaplan (eds), *When Biology became Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New York, 1984, pp. 199-236.

⁷⁸ The number of women in the DFO rose from 4,000 in August 1930 to 10,000 in September 1931. Figures for the Nazi Women's Association reveal 19,382 members in December 1931, rising to 109,320 a year later: Arendt, Hering and Wagner, *Frauenpolitik*, pp. 325-6, 50. For the foundation of the NS-Frauenschaft see Stephenson, *Organisation*, pp. 44 -58.

⁷⁹ Kershaw, 'Ideology', p. 174.

⁸⁰ Paul, *Aufstand*, pp. 125-6, 185-6.

⁸¹ Childers, *Voter*, pp. 259-60.

⁸² Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, London, 1939, p. 259; Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich*, London, 1970, p. 265; Hans-Peter Bleuel, *Strength through Joy. Sex and Society in Nazi*

Germany, London and Edinburgh, 1972, p. 46; Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland. Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*, London, 1986, p. 60.

⁸³ Staatsarchiv Freiburg, 317/1257 d-e, police report of 1 November 1927; Grill, *Nazi Party*, p. 223.

⁸⁴ Hindenburg received 51.5% of the female and 44.2% of the male vote in the first round, Hitler 26.5% and 28.3% respectively. In the second round Hindenburg received 56% of the female and 48.7% of the male vote, Hitler 33.6% of the female and 35.9% of the male: Arendt, Hering and Wagner, *Frauenpolitik*, p. 332.

⁸⁵ Katherine Thomas, *Women in Nazi Germany*, London, 1943, pp. 21, 23-5.

⁸⁶ Thomas, *Women*, pp. 23-5; Koonz, *Mothers*, p. 65.

⁸⁷ Kershaw, 'Ideology', p. 172. Thomas, *Women*, p. 27. Dr Hildebrand's wife led the Karlsruhe branch of the DFO and Dr Endemann's wife was noted for her propaganda activity: Grill, *Nazi Party*, p. 590.

⁸⁸ Renate Bridenthal, 'Beyond "Kinder, Küche, Kirche": Weimar Women at Work', *Central European History*, 6, 1973, pp. 148-66; Richard Evans, 'German Women and the Triumph of Hitler', *Journal of Modern History*, on-demand supplement to vol. 48, 1976.

⁸⁹ Rabe, *Frau*, pp. 6, 9.

⁹⁰ Rupp, 'Mother', p. 375; Childers, *Voter*, p. 267.

⁹¹ Stephenson, 'National Socialism', pp. 44-5; Koonz also believes that Hitler's 'promise to provide a husband for every woman ...had great appeal': Claudia Koonz, 'Mothers in the Fatherland: Women in Nazi Germany', in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (eds), *Becoming Visible. Women in European History*, Boston and London, pp. 445-73.

⁹² William Brustein, 'Nazism through Democracy: Why 14 million Germans voted for the Nazi Party', *Research on Democracy and Society*, 3, 1996, pp.327-52; Marit A. Berntson and Brian Ault, 'Gender and Nazism. Women Joiners of the Pre-1933 Nazi Party', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 41, 1998, pp. 1193-1218.

⁹³ Richard Evans, *Comrades and Sisters. Feminism, Socialism and Pacifism in Europe 1870-1945*, Brighton, 1987, p. 185.

⁹⁴ Phayer, *Protestant and Catholic Women*, pp. 42-55.

⁹⁵ Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, *Nazism 1919-1945. Volume 1. The Rise to Power 1919-1934*, Exeter, 1983, pp. 80-81; Berntson and Ault, 'Gender', pp. 1201, 1211.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Harvey, 'Gender, generation and politics: young Protestant women in the final years of the Weimar Republic', in Mark Roseman (ed), *Generations in Conflict*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 184 -209.

⁹⁷ On reasons why Protestant working-class women may have been drawn to Nazism see Helen Boak, 'National Socialism and Working-class Women before 1933', in Conan Fischer (ed), *The Rise of National Socialism and the Working Classes in Weimar Germany*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 163-188.

⁹⁸ Kershaw, 'Ideology', p. 177.

⁹⁹ Childers, *Voter*, p. 265; idem, 'The Social Bases of the National Socialist Vote', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, 1976, pp. 17-42.

¹⁰⁰ Evans, *Comrades*, p. 184)

¹⁰¹ Sneeringer, *Winning*, p. 231.